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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the  
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL  
THE  
Deputy-Governour,  
AND THE  
Company of MERCHANTS  
Trading to the  
Levant-Seas,

A T  
St Bartholemew-Exchange, May 1. 1689.

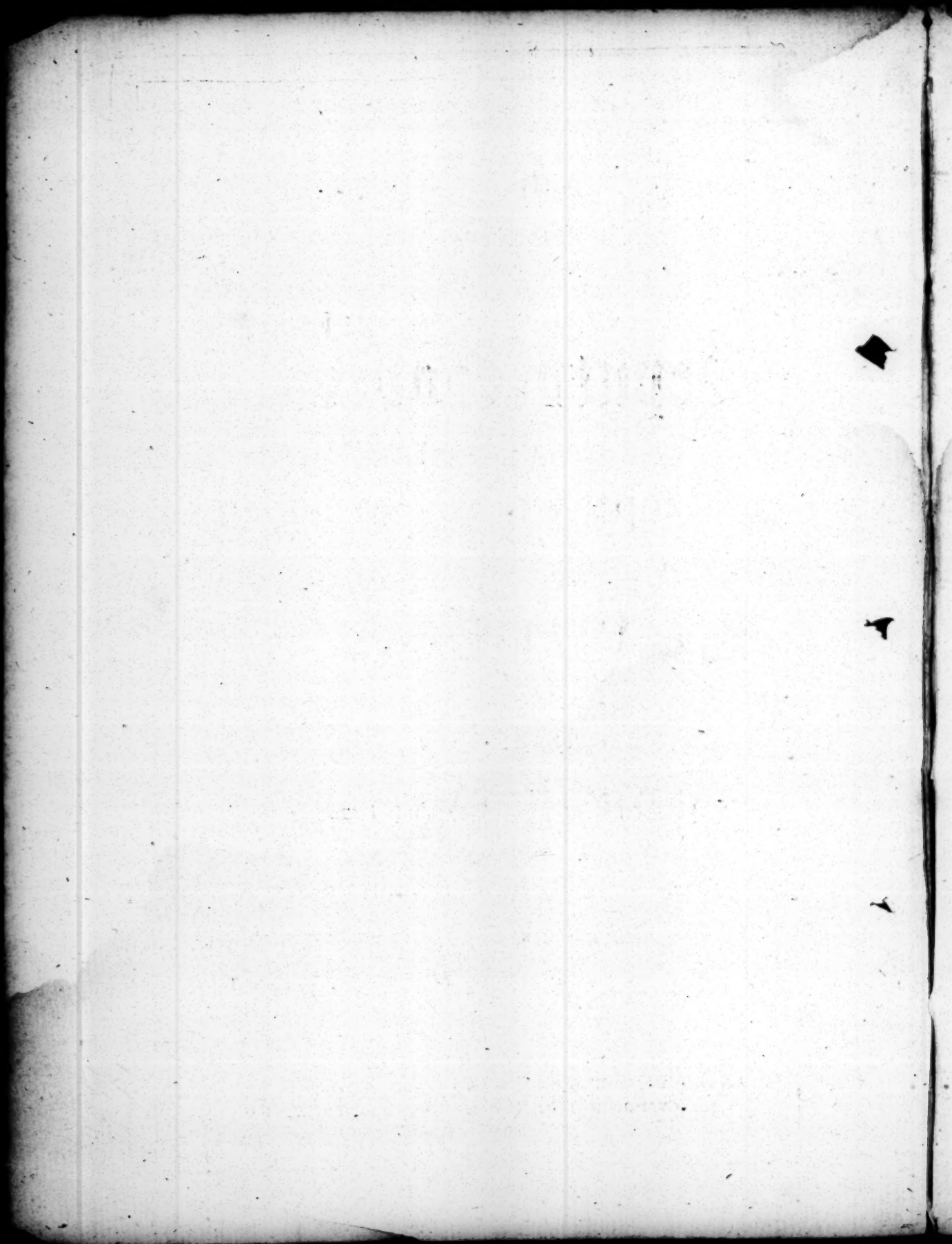
By EDWARD SMYTH, A.M.  
Fellow of Trinity-Colledge near Dublin;  
And Preacher to the Factory at SMYRNA.

IMPRIMATUR,

May 28. 1689.

Hen. Wharton, R.R. in Christo  
P.ac D.D. Wilhelmo Archiep.  
Cant. à Sacris Domest.

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TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
**G E O R G E**  
EARL OF *BERKELY*,  
**G O V E R N O U R**,  
AND THE  
Company of *Turky* Merchants.

Right Honourable, &c.

**T**H E following Discourse has no other pretence to so Honourable a Dedication, but that your Command is the only reason it appears now in Print. Nor could anything justify the Publication of such a Trifle, but that I resolved to be wanting in no instance of an entire Obedience; and that I would refuse no opportunity of acknowledging to the World my Obligations, for the Honour of being elected into the Service of so worthy a Society. to whose Industry and Ingenuity, the English Nation in a great measure owes those extraordinary Advancements  
of



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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

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*of Wealth and Reputation abroad, this last Century has made. Whose most eminent Vertues, exemplary Charity, and signal Services to your Country, have rais'd you up to be the Ornament of your own, as the Envy of all neighbouring Nations. I could here offer a very just Apology for the uncorrectness of this Paper, that it was conceived and brought forth in haste, that the Concern I had for my afflicted Brethren of Ireland, had so far the Ascendant of my thoughts, as not to give way to that serenity and calmness of mind, which such a performance did require. But since I address myself to Persons of your Candour, I am not to doubt of all favourable allowances. I hope hereafter to glean something in your own Harvest, to which with less blushing I may prefix your Names. And as 'tis now my Duty, so shall it ever be my Study to promote your Prosperity and Happiness, for obtaining which Blessings, shall be daily offer'd the Prayers of,*

Right Honourable, and Gentlemen,

Your ever obliged, and

most obedient Servant,

EDWARD SMYTH.



A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Levant-Company.

ISAIAH XXVI. latter part of *Ver. ix.*

—*For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

SO wonderful are the Methods by which the Divine Wisdom has contrived our Salvation ; that the bare conceiving them is no less above our Capacity, than that Infinite Reward surpasses all our Pretensions to Merit. There is not one Attribute in the Divinity, which bears not a part in the miraculous Work of our Redem-  
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ption; the Unspeakable Wisdom invented it; and the Almighty Power accomplished it; his Mercy has provided for our Infirmities, and his Justice has insured our Salvation, that our hope is not in vain in the Lord.

And if ever Religion provided effectually for the salvation and happiness of Mankind, this is peculiar to Christianity. For if we have the least spark of Ingenuity or Good Nature in our Temper, the Evangelical Promises suited to the most prevailing Passions of our Soul, the Cords of Love, the Wings of Mercy, the Charms of Heaven, its Delights drawn to the Life, the Voice of the Charmer, who surely Charms most wisely; the Pleasure of Religion, and the Sweets of Vertue must make us Profelytes to Heaven, and force us to be Happy.

But then, should we despise even all these powerful Inducements to Happiness, tho' we are deaf to the Voice of the Charmer; the Long-suffering of God does not yet fail us. There are his terrible Judgments set out with all the Aggravations of Horrour and Amaze-ment, to reclaim us; to awaken us from that sleep, which is surely unto Death, the Terrours of the Lord, the Flaming Sword, an  
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Angry God armed with Power, and Vengeance must strike us into a religious reverence. *When the Lion roareth who will not hear?* Hof. 11. 10. When the Almighty appears clad with his Robes of Vengeance, as the Prophet speaketh, and surrounded with the Terrour of his Judgments making Inquisition for Sin, how shall the amazed sinner appear? with what confusion of face must he loath his polluted Soul! If the still Voice could not, the Eloquence of God speaking in his Judgments must deeply affect him with the profoundest Dread and Reverence. Even the stupid Romans could then think of God, when Calamities were their severe Remembrancers: *For when thy Judgments (O Lord) are in the Land, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

Where, by Righteousness, as is obvious in Scripture-Phrase, we are to understand Vertue and Religion in general: so that the sense of the words will be this, That the Divine Judgments are most instructive of Duty and Religion; that this is their Drift, and that we ought to learn this Lesson from them. From which words I will take occasion to discourse to the following Particulars.



*First*, I will endeavour to Assign some Proper Marks, and Characters which may enable us to discern the Divine Judgments; as when dispensed by a Special Providence, and proceeding from the more immediate Hand of God.

*Secondly*, I will enquire into the more Notorious Ends, to which the Divine Wisdom has directed his Judgments.

*Thirdly and Lastly*, I will enquire, what is the Proper Behaviour of a Christian under the Judgments of God, and what Influence they ought to have on our Lives.

*First* then, I will endeavour to Assign some Proper Marks and Characters, which may enable us to discern the Divine Judgments; as when dispensed by a Special Providence, and proceeding from the Hand of God.

To ascribe every Petty Chance, that happens, to a Special Providence, may signify Lightness; to father on God the Mischiefs arising from our Sin and Folly, may favour  
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of Prophaneness. By the Judgments of God therefore, I desire you will understand such extraordinary Occurrences, as carry in them some peculiar Marks of the Divine Anger; and are signal Instances of his Vindictive Justice.

And here sometimes the Hand of God is made bare, rais'd up, and stretch'd out in the Performance of most surprizing Works: Thus the Earth swallow'd up *Corah* with his Accomplices; and a Fire from Heaven snatched away the prophane hands, which offer'd Incense; and many such signal Examples wholly unaccountable from the Power or Efficacy of Natural Causes as to all their circumstances, do the Holy Scriptures afford us.

But then again, that same Almighty Hand is wrapped up sometimes in a complication with Inferiour Causes when 'tis not lifted up so high, or so far extended in miraculous Works. And here the special Vindictive Providence may not be impressed on Events, in Characters so big and clear, as to be legible to the most prejudiced eye. The Tracts thereof may be sometimes too fine and subtil, to be descried by a dimn sight, with a transient glance, or upon a gross view it may  
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not affect the unreasonable sceptick, or such as are wholly indisposed to receive it.

But shall not we adore his Almighty Power, and acknowledge his Judgments in inferiour Events, in a Plague or Famine unless a flaming Comet sets the World on fire, and amaze us into a fit of Religion? must we wantonly prescribe to the Divine Wisdom? deny him the Ministry of Second Causes, and refuse all Nourishment, unless we are fed with palpable Miracles? For tho' Special Providence in the severer dispensation of Judgments is sometimes clouded by the concurrence of Natural Agents, yet if we attend and consider them, we shall easily discover some Marks of Vengeance imprinted on them. And surely 'tis the practice of good men, to contemplate and study Providence; the Prophet ranketh him only among the wise, who understandeth the Judgments of the Lord: 'tis a Matter for pious meditation, warranted by the practice of good men, to implore the manifestation of God's Power and Justice. If we therefore approach with this preparation of mind, ready to attend the least intimations of his displeasure, and to apply them to the amendment of our Lives, to  
learn



learn Righteousness from them, the following Marks and Characters may be of good use to us, to discern and reverence the Judgments of God : And these Characters I shall draw either from the Nature, or some Circumstance of such Events.

The first Character then of a Special Providence, and the visible Hand of God, is the wonderful strangeness of Events ; as when great Effects are accomplish'd, either by no apparent means, or by means wholly disproportionate, and often repugnant to the effect. Thus have we seen the mightiest Forces discomfited ; the firmest Structures demolished ; Designs enforced, with all the advantages of Strength and Cunning confounded and how unaccountable the way ? no visible means appear'd, Nature seeming to have managed the War, and the Elements to have fought against them : Panick Fears, or sudden Deaths, having seized the principal Instruments. How ready is any part of the Creation to minister to the Divine Vengeance ? the Stars in their courses fought against *Sisera* , *Judges* 5. 20. the Winds and Skys became Auxiliaries to *Theodosius* ; the Lord thundred upon the *Philistines* ; and  
how

how should they stand against the Host of Heaven? the Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the Camp of the *Philistines* 185000 Men. Thus the mighty Power of *Antiochus* was to be broken without hands.

How often has Impotency, and the weak things of the Lord, triumphed over Might? Thus a Stripling, furnished only with the Breast-plate of Faith and a Pebble, shall fell down a monstrous Gyant, tho' armed with an Helmet of Brass, a huge Target, Sword and Spear. How often have we seen the deepest Intrigue and Policy, whose Foundation was laid in Hell, either blasted of it self, or baffled by simplicity? the most perspicacious Counsellours blinded and infatuated? the subtil, treacherous, designing Politician not only supplanted in his wicked enterprize, but dismally chastised by it, and falling into his own snare? Surely then such Occurrences do more than insinuate the Divine Vengeance concerned to countermine and confound such devices. 'Tis he certainly that *maketh the Diviners mad, turneth wise Men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish*, *Isaiah* 44. 25. When Plots contrived in darkness are by unaccountable accidents disclosed and brought

brought to light, a Bird of the Air telling the Matter, or the Stones crying out Treason, as the Prophet speaketh: and shall not this argue the Finger of God to be engaged? Behold that very design, which contrived the destruction of *David*, encreaseth his Honour; the Stratagems to supplant *Daniel*, make him grow in the King's favour. Must not this then be the special Operation of that God whose peculiar it is to do wondrous things, to be terrible in his Judgments?

A second Character of a Special Providence, is the seasonableness and suddenness of Events.

When pernicious Enterprizes, which aim at nothing less than the subversion of a Kingdom are grown to maturity, and are just ready for execution, how often, beyond the Power of Humane Understanding, have we seen them either surprisngly discovered, or seasonably prevented? And shall not this be a pregnant evidence, that an ever-vigilant Eye, and the all-powerful Hand are engaged? Thus was *Pharaoh* with his Host overwhelmed, when he had just overtaken the Children of *Israel*. Thus when *Sennacherib* with an infinite force had invested *Jerusalem*,

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when certain death seem'd to threaten the holy City, God put a Hook into his Nose, and turn'd him back into his own Land, 2 King. 9. 28. When the prophane *Caligula* was just ready to discharge his bloody rage on the *Jews*, for their refusing to worship the presumptuous Wretch; a domestick Sword presently gave vent to his revengeful Breath. When *Julian*, by his Authority and Policy, had projected the overthrow of our Religion, his Plot is baffled, and he falls ingloriously by an unknown Hand. Certainly then we must here acknowledge the secret efficacy of God, who pours down such unexpected Vengeance on the counsels of the wicked. This is the method of his peculiar Providence, he could as easily prevent the very beginning of wicked Designs; but he permits the Contrivers to mount to the top of Confidence and Expectation; and then *μὴ χάνῃς* surprizingly, unexpectedly he issues forth a Judgment, and confounds the Elaborate Undertaking. Be astonish'd therefore and tremble all ye workers of Iniquity, and let the Lord be magnified in his Judgments.

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly*, Another Character of the Divine Judgments, and of a special Providence in dispensing them, is from their kind and countenance, which often bear a significant resemblance to those sins, for which they are inflicted. Punishments (saith a Father) are the forced Off-spring of wilful Faults, and therefore carry the Complexions and Features of their Parents : And thus the sin becomes often legible in the Judgment, which is design'd to punish it, which provoked and wrested it from Heaven. How often have we seen ambitious Confidence mourning in Disgrace ; Avarice cursed with Decay of Estate ; the blasphemous Throat torn out ; the bloody Oppressor weltring in his own Blood, who but just now glutted in his Brothers ; an Accident which almost continually doth happen ; so signal is the Revenge of Murder : the Treacherous betray'd ; Places which prided themselves in Wealth and Greatness, Power and Magnificence, now buried in Ruins, and more desolate than the Wilderness. Surely such Occurrences do point out, and judicate the Finger of God, they speak plainly that they are his doings : by such Actions he most evidently declares himself the Judge and Go-

vernour of Mankind ; *Who directeth the Instruments of Divine Vengeance against Babylon, to take Vengeance upon her as she hath done,* Jer. 51. 49.

Notwithstanding therefore any obscurity or intricacy that may sometimes appear in the course of Providence ; as whether such Events proceed from the more immediate hand of God : if we consider wisely, with pious Attention , and a devout Heart ; if with Minds pure from vain Prejudices, and corrupt Affections ; the Marks, and Characters now assign'd, will be of good Use and Direction to us.

We are too apt indeed to put off the Religious Reflections, and with the *Philistin* loves to question whether this came by the Hand of God or not. But we may answer our selves by a cheaper Experiment than they did : If the Characters now assign'd could not direct us ; our own Sins will tell us plainly, we have deserved the Divine Judgments : and surely it were more useful for a Christian to make this Application , then wantonly to dispute about the Nature of them.

There are some who either through idleness of humour, or an affectation to be reputed



ted wise, have undertaken to arraign the Judgments of God ; and to level them ordinary Events, and Natural Effects. With such presumption some have attempted to account for that General Deluge, which swept away all Mankind , except Eight Persons , from Natural Causes. But surely these Men are more acted with a fondness of their new Conceptions , than by any zeal for Truth. For whoever but seriously reflects on all the Circumstances of that Event, must confess it beyond the power of Nature or Chance ; and will condemn that Philosophy as vain, which would advance such Extravagancies.

Having thus vindicated the Divine Judgments, and shewn them to you by their proper Marks and Characters. I proceed,

2dly, To enquire into the more notorious Ends and Purposes to which the Divine Wisdom has directed them.

The first end then of the Divine Judgments is to proclaim God's Omnipotence, and assert the just Power of God over the World.

And can we imagine a more pregnant Evidence of a resistless and uncontrollable Power ; for behold the Effects of his Indignation ; the Pillars of Heaven astonished, and

and the Earth trembling with an awful Reverence : Nature agast, and the Hinges of the World shaking. And now surely we are not of so Gygantick stoutness, to stand void of Sense and Fear, when Nature herself is in such Pangs and Convulsions. Are not these such Examples as carry Conviction with them ? As ravish a Religious Fear and Reverence from us. Can any thing be more instructive of the deepest Humility, and most profound Adoration. When we shall see Fate submit to the Command of God, and Necessity become as variable as Chance : For lo he maketh the Earth to reel to and fro, he pulleth down and buildeth up as it pleaseth him.

The proudest Monarchs, whom he sometimes stileth Gods, how suddenly does he alay them with Dust, least their Spirits become too much exalted. How easily does he baffle their most Elaborate Contrivances. Did not every thing we wear about us proclaim our weakness ; the Divine Judgments could not fail to be a sufficient Amulet against Pride. Are we able to defend our selves against the least Calamity ; when the weakest Creature comes armed with a Commission from Heaven, the very Dust of the Earth,

Earth, or but a Troop of inconsiderable Locusts can overcome an *Egypt* ; though her Wealth and Power were as boundless, as her Sins were provoking.

Can any Man then reflect on the many Judgments of God, on those astonishing Effects of his Indignation ; and not presently tremble and stand amazed. With what an awful Regard, with what profound Humility must this fill our Minds. Are not these such effectual Arguments of Almighty Power, as must raise us in the greatest Security ; tho' all the Dalliances of Vice had enchanted us, tho' the Lethargy of Sin had locked up our Reason and Consideration, yet such signal Examples must affect us : the most hardened Hearts, and even fear'd Consciences cannot escape some impression : For shall not we attend, when even Heaven and Earth are summon'd to hear.

Lord, how can we sufficiently Adore thy Power, when we meditate on thy terrible Judgments : for behold any part of the Creation, shall at thy Command become a most powerful Executioner of Vengeance. Let but the Sea open her proud Waves, ( and 'tis thy word that restrains them ) and she  
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may shut in the World, as she once did the Host of Pharaoh. Surely then our Minds must be stupified ; we are asleep even unto Death, if such instances cannot awaken us, *For by his Judgments he sheweth himself, and lifteth himself up*, Psal. 94. 1, 2. *The Lord is known by the Judgments he executeth*, Psal. 9. 16.

If the several parts of the Creation display the several Attributes of God ; if we may read his Power in the Firmament, and the Heavens declare it. In his Judgments certainly 'tis writ in the fairest and largest Print ; and here we must read it, tho' all other Arguments would pass without observation. If the wiser Heathens by Thought and Study, by Speculation and Philosophy were able from considering the Works of Nature to conclude an All-powerful Being : How strongly do his wonderful Judgments enforce this Truth, and exact from us the humblest Acknowledgments of Almighty Power.

A second end of the Divine Judgments is, to vindicate his Justice in the Administration of the World : for were Men suffered with Impunity to proceed in a course of Impiety ;  
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to enjoy the fruits of Rapine, Injustice, and other Vices, which then might appear gainful; were they suffer'd to defie Heaven with their crying sins; this might seem to arraign the Justice of God; it might give the Atheists and Epicureans Objection some colour, that in the Administration of the World there was no regard had to the good and vertuous. But tho' this, if true, might be abundantly answer'd; that the Methods of Wisdom, and Rules of Justice, by which the Almighty acts, do infinitely surpass our Capacities; either from the feebleness of our Reason, or finiteness of our Nature; and because the Divine Administration has no compleat determination here, but has regard to a future Judgment. Yet to the everlasting terrour of wickedness, most signal Vengeance often overtakes the wretched sinner here; and National sins seldome escape some signal Judgment, or General Calamity. The Examples from Scripture, and such as I have already assign'd; yea, the Occurrences of our own Age will sufficiently confirm this.

3dly, Another end of the Divine Judgments is, to work in us an entire hatred and detestation of sin.

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'Tis the greatest force and provocation to the Deity, when he pours down his wrath upon us, he does not willingly grieve us, or causlessly afflict us: 'Tis our sins which makes us smart under that Hand, which otherwise would shew down nothing but Blessings upon us. What ought our demeanour then to be, when Judgments are upon us, and we groan under the pressure of Afflictions? Why to reflect on our sins, to blush and be ashamed; to be humbled for our Iniquities, which were the cause of that and all our sufferings; assuring our selves, that whatever evil Instruments are in the Judgments and Afflictions which befall us, our sins have set them all in motion.

And when the Avenger is at the Gate, O how lashing the folly, how confounding must the guilt of sin appear? When *Israel* the Favourite of Heaven is led into Captivity for her crying Idolatry, how pungent must her Resentments be? How afflicting the remembrance of her Spiritual Fornications. Extremely blind and stupid therefore must we be, or monstrously profane, if such Experiments of Divine Power and Vengeance do not awe us, and frighten us from sin. 'Tis  
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our incurable folly that Afflictions are the only effectual Physick of our Souls ; that the bitter is the only Sovereign Potion.

How must the wretched sinner appear confounded ; when he sees Almighty God, whom but even now he openly affronted, whose Religion he ridicul'd , whose Honour he abused, coming on the Wings of Power, and making inquisition for sin ; when there is an Earthquake ready to swallow him up, or a Fire from Heaven to consume him. O miserable Miscreant ! Whither wilt thou fly from the All-seeing, or shelter thy self from his presence ? Can Darkness screen thee, or the Night cover thee ? Abominate then thy sins, loath thy polluted self ; Cut off the Instruments of thy Destruction, -which have rendered thee so obnoxious.

4thly, Another end of the Divine Judgments is to beget in us a thorough Contempt of the World and its fatal Dalliances : to enforce the Divine Precept of setting our Hearts on things above.

For do not the Divine Judgments teach us ; either how fugitive and uncertain, or how unsatisfying and empty all suplunary Beings are. How suddenly have we seen the adamantine

works of Art and Contrivance subverted. Even the Foundations of the World trembling, when the God of Nature was angry. Monuments the vain Essays to Eternity, rais'd to perpetuate the Memory of some remarkable Accident, or to carry the Name of some Great Person to late Posterity, how often have we seen them buried in those very Ruines, which 'twas hoped they should rescue from Oblivion. The best established Kingdoms have been overturned in a moment. Those places which prided themselves in their imaginary Security; and boasted of the multitude of their Inhabitants, and whose Merchants were fit to be Companions to Princes; how has a Fire from Heaven, or any other Creature able to do it, when commissioned from Heaven to destroy, swept them away? So that scarce their Names remain to reproach their Pride.

Common Prudence does strongly press upon us this observation, when every day informs us of the great emptiness and uncertainty of all worldly enjoyments. And did not the wise Heathens of old, from this very Topic raise themselves to a brave and generous contempt of the World; what else was the  
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Moral of that Chance, by which they believed all things here below to be governed: but that all things are subject to the same fleeting and uncertain condition. And tho' no Instrument of Vengeance were sent to destroy, no earthly thing is in itself durable; but shall return to its original corruption. And do not the Divine Judgments enforce this Duty from higher Considerations; when Destruction falls in like a mighty torrent. The rich Man but begins to enjoy, and behold that very Night his Soul is required from him. And this surely must correct our Dotage, it must secure us from the Syren Enchantments of but momentary Evils. For as sin is the lasting evil which has infected our Nature, so Judgment and Vengeance will always hang over us to frighten us from the gilded Poyson, and wean us by frequent disappointments from any fondness we may have for earthly things.

Thus have I laid before you the more notorious Ends of the Divine Judgments, which are intended either to proclame the Power, or vindicate the Justice of God; to work in us a thorough hatred of sin, and a generous contempt of all worldly things.

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I proceed therefore in the third and last place, to enquire what is the proper behaviour of a Christian under the Judgments of God, and what influence they ought to have on our Lives.

Almighty God takes no delight in hurling the World into Confusion, and turning Cities into Ruines, making whole Countries a desolation. Our provocations must cry aloud when he executes the severity of his Judgments. 'Tis therefore for the punishment of sin, and frightening us from it by such dreadful Examples, by all the Rhetorick of the most amazing Instances, and all the Eloquence of the acutest Pain.

To learn our Duty therefore in this particular, we are to reflect on all the Ends of the Divine Judgments already assign'd.

Are the Divine Judgments then evidently declarative of an Almighty Power? This surely must imprint on us the profoundest Humility and most awful Reverence, it must affect us with all sorts of Religious Fear: it must strike into our Hearts the most sincere dread of his ever glorious Majesty; it must inflame us with the greatest Acknowledgments, with the loudest Acclamations of the Infinite Power

er of God, and his adorable Perfections ; for shall not we fear, when the Heavens do shake and tremble. And in this Duty we have the devout *Pfalmist's* Zeal so ardent, that it must excite ours, and we shall cry out with one mouth : *Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, and I will declare thy greatness. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.* We must celebrate the adorable Perfections displayed in such wonderful Events. Do not the Divine Judgments glorifie his Justice ; and shall they not inspire us to magnifie this glorious Attribute, when his Judgments represent to us his signal Triumphs over Sin ; all the Strength and Beauty of the World being made Prisoners to the Grave, and Captives to Destruction, which but just now bid him so proud a defiance. We who just now finned with as much Security and Confidence, as tho' we had blinded the Eyes, bugbear'd the Justice, or commands the Power of God ; cannot, however, but applaud his Justice : when of a sudden like one highly provoked he draws forth the Sword of his destroying Angel, commands the Wretch who looked so big into the Dust, and hurls him into Destruction.

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Are not the Divine Judgments sent from Heaven to raise in us an hatred and aversion to sin ; and to wean us from the World. And surely the least serious reflection on them cannot fail of this effect. When the Instruments of Vengeance are upon us, when Death in the ghastly appearance of a Judgment stares us in the face ; must we not then melt into such Complaints as these : O that I had served God as faithfully , as I have done the World, he would not have forsaken me, as that now is like to do. Had I laid up my Treasure in Heaven, it would not have been in the power of any outward accident now to deprive me of him. If these Flames of Vengeance are so insupportable, who shall be able to dwell with everlasting Burnings. Is it not the height of madness, to desire any longer, to provoke an angry God, infinitely more dreadful than this can be. Farewel then all ye deceitful Vanities ; tho' I plac'd my Riches next my Heart, that could not clip their wings, or stop their flight. Tho' I preserved my Beauty with all the Extravagance of Art ; I must lose it this instant. Now I understand by dear Experience, thee and my self better (O bewitching World)



World) then to fix my Happiness any longer here. I will hereafter lay up my Treasure in Heaven, I will be no longer cheated with imaginary good, but will make provision for the true and everlasting happiness. Let these then be our reflections, and we shall rise with greater Glory; our inward Beauty will outshine whatever we could boast of outward splendor. We shall come out purified from the Fire of Afflictions; with our Souls possessed of the only valuable Riches of Grace and Vertue.

Our proper demeanour then, and the use we are to make of the Divine Judgments; the most signal expressions of Almighty God's displeasure is, what the Prophet in my Text draws from them, *To learn Righteousness*, to be instructed in the Ways of Vertue, and in all the Duties of Religion.

And is not this the Moral and Natural Consequence of the Divine Judgments; which represent Sin in its proper Colours, attended with horror and amazement, dread and confusion of face. And when we see Vice thus sinking into Hell, how much must we be enamoured with the Comeliness, the Divine Pleasure, the Heaven of Vertue,

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which the wretched Sinner only admires to aggravate his misery. Can any thing more effectually recommend Humility, than the exemplary downfall of Pride; when a Fire-brand from Heaven levels us with the Dust, and forces the vain Bubble to an humble acknowledgment of his true Original, where the Worm is our Sister, and a much happier Creature. When we see Luxury and Intemperance chastised by some signal Calamity, by the Desolation of a Plague, by an Earthquake, by a Fire from Heaven: How effectually must this press upon our Consideration the contrary and proper Vertues of Sobriety and Temperance. All that deceitful pleasure and advantage with which sin has so long imposed on us, appears now in its Native Deformity, with its true Off-spring Vengeance and Judgment. With what zeal and ardency must we fly to the Breast-plate of Faith, when all our imaginary Security shall betray us, when neither Palaces nor Bulwarks can defend us; and the Earth sinking under the load of our Iniquities cannot afford us footing. Shall not the Hypocrite then unfold his Soul, when he sees that all his pretensions to Religion make him only the more ob-

obnoxious to Vengeance , and that his Rags and Nakedness are now most apparent. Is there any thing then which makes us more effectually bow to the Precepts of Religion, then the Terrours of the Lord, then his wonderful, his dreadful Judgments.

Whence do we proceed better Proficients then from the School of Calamities. A storm will inspire Devotion even into that thoughtless Wretch, who in his Security and Debauchery reviled every thing that was serious ; who scorned to damp his Mirth with the melancholy thoughts of Religion, and the sad countenance of Sobriety. Who knew no such thing as the Pleasures of the Mind, and would not value whether he had any rational Faculties, unless it were for the contrivance of Oaths, and making new Discoveries in the ways of wickedness ; who was as great a Monster in Morality as ever there was in Nature. How suppliant a Convert has a storm made him, how has an Earthquake reformed him. When the Angel of Vengeance is at hand, ready to smite the Covetous and Oppressor ; how does this melt him into love and kindness, into charity and good works ; is he not ready to cloath the



naked, whom he even now spoiled, and to relieve that poor man, whose Face he had now been grinding.

Had most sins no other punishment then there necessary and natural consequents; were there no other scourge for Luxury and Intemperance, but decay of Estate, a Crasped Body, and that they sow the Seeds of all Distempers, this would be Amulet against them to a considering Man. But when a flaming Sword, a Plague and Famine, and infinite other Instruments of a most terrible Vengeance do certainly attend them. O stupified Man! O monstrous Security! If this will not awaken you and force you to Repentance. When your Cities lie in Ruines, mourning in Dust and Ashes, because you neglected this Duty; when your Country welters in Blood, and even the Stones cry out against you, to melt your more hardened Heart. You cannot behold such Desolation without making this reflection; 'Tis our sins surely which have made us thus liable to the Divine Vengeance; had we any reason to expect his Protection, we might sit quiet tho' the World be overturned; this was the Hedge about *Job*, which  
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till withdrawn, baffled all the Attempts of Satan : But alas, our sins have put a Bar to this Claim, we have forfeited God's Protection, and our reliance is now but presumption. And can any thing more effectually press upon us Vertue and Religion than such Considerations.

And truly few Men are so hardned, as not to be struck with an awful Reverence, to be forced into some Fit of Religion; when they labour under some eminent Judgment : For Vengeance carries with it such a convincing force, that few are able to resist it : Even the Atheist cries to Heaven, when Death in the dreadful shape of a Judgment (to him surely most terrible) do seize him. Thunder forces *Caligula* to seek for shelter ; even the hardned *Pharaoh* relents, when the Almighty issues forth his Instruments of Vengeance ; when the Strength of *Egypt* is overpowred by a Locust ; how does it extort from him the ungrateful confession of his own weakness, and forces him to fly to the Intercession of *Moses*. But then, alas, we are all *Pharaohs* too in our shameful Ingratitude ; the Religious temper seldom out-lives our Deliverance ; those convictions  
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and reflections usually wear off, as the Judgment intermits. When the Scene is shifted, and the succeeding Light has dispelled the Cloud, we then unbend the Bow, let our severer thoughts disband, and return to our former Security. But this surely, as 'tis the greatest Abuse of the Divine Mercy in our Deliverance, so must it pull down an heavier Judgment upon us.

'Tis our duty then, to treasure up the serious memory of all our past Sufferings, and so to perpetuate the effects of them ; that we may come out the purer from the Furnace, and not like the New Moon return with the same Spots, not to imbibe again those stains of sin, which have already rendred us so obnoxious to Divine Vengeance. And was it not for this reason, that the Christian Church in all Ages has thought fit to Consecrate certain Days of Humiliation, as sure and perpetual Remembrancers of the Divine Judgments, and her frequent Deliverances ; least by a shameful Ingratitude she should trample on and bury the Mercies of God in Oblivion. But methinks common Prudence should direct us to this Practice, to beware of that Rod under which we have smarted, and to forsake those  
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sins which have so often exposed us to Death and Destruction.

Many therefore are the Duties to which our Deliverance from past Calamities, and the consideration of Judgments we have escaped, do oblige us.

First we must ever glorifie Almighty God with the Songs and Triumphs of our Deliverance, we must write our Deliverance not on Tables of Stone, but on the fleshly Tables of our Heart. *The Righteous shall be glad in the Lord.* When he sees his Glory so conspicuously advanced, and his holy Perfections so illustriously shining through his Judgments; this signal conviction of Infidelity, this confusion of Prophaneness how does it confirm his Faith, and cherish his Hope. The just shall rejoyce, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. How exceeding the Comfort? How triumphant is the Joy, when we receive so clear Pledges of God's Love and Favour to us, express'd in his most tender Care over us, in protecting us from most imminent Dangers, and contriving our deliverance from such terrible Judgments; for were we not saved even as by Fire, and as Fire-brands pluckt out of the burning. Let us then ever magnifie (O Lord)

Lord) thy infinite Mercy's the only cause of our deliverance, for this was our Sanctuary and Refuge, it was not our own Skill and Counsel, not our Strength and Industry that saved us; but thou art our mighty Deliverer.

A Second Duty incumbent on us, is often to meditate on past Judgments. We must not barely remember them, for this is no Vertue; but we must remember them with those very passions of mind, those ardent thoughts, affections, and resentments we had when we suffered under them, and they were so visible before us; what indignation, and resolution we then expressed against sin; what submissions were then wrought in us to his Almighty pleasure, and with what mortification and self-denial we resigned our selves. And this is remembring in Scripture phrase, by which we may secure to our selves all the advantages of past afflictions, without the sting and misery which attends them; by setting them in a clear light before us, and making them present to us by a lively remembrance, so that they may be a constant bugbear to us against Vice. Let not those ardors of Devotion expire, those struglings of the Spirit cease, which burnt them so bright;  
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if our Petitions kept equal pace with our Pain, let them do so with the remembrance of it now.

Our Meditations on past Judgments ought also to beget in us a well grounded hope, and strong confidence. The Lord hath delivered me, therefore he will deliver ; I have often experimented his Mercy, therefore I will now fly to it. If we have strengthened our Prayers in the day of our Calamity, by any extraordinary Vow, or Sacred Promises (according to the pious Examples of Holy Men) we are now carefully to perform them, and to release that strict Obligation we have put our Souls under.

And there are many other Religious Duties of the same nature (for there are scarce any which it does not confirm and encrease) which the remembrance of past Judgments strongly recommend to our practise. Nothing can more effectually secure to us all the advantages and fruits of the Spirit. But not having time now to enlarge on them, I must refer them to your own application.

Only let me beg your attention, whilst in a few words, I remind you of that late signal Judgment, and deplorable Calamity ; in which this Honourable Audience was deeply wounded. The late Judgment which beset *Smyrna*, that complicated Calamity of an Earthquake most terrible in all its circumstances, succeeded by a Fire, (too pregnant an instance of the Divine Vengeance) cannot, if barely related, but fill the most hardened Heart with pity and astonishment ; but on you surely, whose misfortune it was to be too much concerned in it, who were so great Sufferers in the Desolation it wrought, it ought, it must make, a more deep and lasting impression.



The Lord surely was in the Earthquake, and in the Whirlwind ; the suddenness of the Destruction even exceeding thought, and all the dismal circumstances attending this Accident are too strong an evidence, that the destroying Angel came from Heaven, and that the Almighty put on Vengeance to the overthrow of that miserable City.

For behold the trembling Earth sinking to her Center, with the strokes of God's Anger legible in her face; behold a great and opulent City, famous in ancient and sacred Annals, and even then restored to her former Grandeur, surpassing in Trade, and equal in many other advantages to any of her Sisters in the *East*, reduced to ruin in a moment. The same instant saw her a most flourishing City, and an heap of Rubbish. And that nothing of her Beauty or Greatness might be legible in her Fall; a consuming Fire devours her very Bowels, what escaped the Earthquake becomes a prey to the Fire. So heavy was the Hand of Heaven that it pursues her to the very Grave, buries her very Ruins, and razes her Foundation. O the consternation of her living, and confusion of her perishing Inhabitants! O the sighs and tears, frights and amazements! O the deaths! (and many were deny'd even this mercy) O the half Deaths (Heads and Hearts miserably surviving the other Members) of Men, Women, and Children lamenting, yet unable to help themselves and one another! The Mother just lived to see her Daughter die, and the same Ruin involved the whole Family. Such, had I courage, and were I sufficiently informed to proceed in the description, you may imagine the lamentable Condition of *Smyrna* was. *And was this done upon the earth, and the Lord hath not done it.*

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How swift ( O Lord ) is destruction , when thou dost give it Commission. Even the dull Earth shall become a swift Executioner of Divine Vengeance. One Instant can, and did overturn the Toil, the Improvement of an Age. Such is the folly and guilt of our sins, that against a City so advantaged, so cultivated, so blessed, they can extort the heaviest Vengeance, even from that hand whence all her Blessings derived. It was from their fatal influence that she is now forced to succeed in the Fate and Ruine, as in the Wealth and Splendour of her Neighbours; that she is now become *like unto Sodom and Gomorrah*.

Were that City able to speak out of its Ruins; how Eloquent would she be on that Subject of her Sufferings; what heavy Complaints would she make against those Sins which have been the certain and fatal Instruments of her destruction. Let her Breaches then, let her Ruins and Desolation speak; behold the genuine Off-spring of Vice, the fruit of those things of which we ought to be ashamed. And surely we cannot look on her Ruins but we must repent, we cannot see her miseries without bewailing our own sins. And let us not here flatter our selves, or run into that dangerous mistake; that the Infidelity of the *Jew* and *Mahometan*, that the Idolatry and Superstition of *Popery* are the only provocations which brought down this heavy Judgment. Our sins, alas, are but too much the ingredients, and its wounds and scars yet bleeding afresh, are but too strong an intimation that we are still in our sins.

To conclude all then :

You have heard how Eloquent the Judgments of the Lord are to perswade Repentance, and inforce all the Duties of Religion; how they recommend Vertue from the strongest Topicks of worldly Interest and Pleasure, as the surest means to preserve both. How they represent to us most sensibly the destructive nature of Sin, that all the Misery and Unhappiness which befalls Mankind, flow certainly from this Fountain. This being then our case, common prudence, the obvious consideration of our own advantage must direct us to that Duty which Christianity commands. Sin and Folly will be found but two Names for the same thing. Let us therefore apply our selves to the study of true Wisdom. Let us make the true advances in Grace and Vertue. And now the Judgments of the Lord are upon the Earth. Let us learn, let us practise Righteousness, for Godliness we see is the true Gain, it has the Blessings of this World, and that which is to come.

To which place of everlasting Happiness, Almighty God of his infinite Mercy, bring us all. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 5. last line, after view a Full Stop. p. 11. l. 24. judicate r. indicate.  
p. 12. l. 17. loves r. Lords. p. 16. l. 14. would r. should. p. 23. l. 23. bug-  
bear'd r. bribed. l. 22. commands r. commanded. p. 24. l. 13. Treasure r.  
Treasures. l. 15. him. r. them. p. 29. l. 17. do r. does.